

Nancy Johnson



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Johnson Relief Measure Passes House

Provides \$2 Billion to Help Families Hurt by Katrina

Included in Larger Aid Bill Approved by Congress

WASHINGTON, DC – A provision Congresswoman Nancy Johnson included in hurricane relief legislation today will provide up to \$2 billion in federal funds for emergency financial assistance to low-income families devastated by Katrina.

"This catastrophe has left many American families with nothing and in need of our help," Johnson said. "This critical legislation will address the immediate needs of families devastated by the hurricane and its aftermath. The bill will fast-track important social services and financial assistance that these families need to start rebuilding their lives."

Johnson's provision allows states to use funds from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program's contingency account to provide emergency cash assistance to evacuees that qualify for TANF. States can access up to \$2 billion to help these families rebuild their lives.

The provision is part of the "TANF Emergency Response and Recovery Act of 2005," which passed by a voice vote. The relief bill expedites the delivery of TANF funds to the states and suspends many bureaucratic rules that may hinder or slow aid to low-income victims. It is expected to reach the President's desk soon.

More than 235,400 evacuees are currently housed in 750 shelters in 20 states, according to federal authorities. Connecticut plans to provide housing, social services, and cash assistance to 1,500 evacuees, Governor M. Jodi Rell said yesterday. All evacuees who qualify for TANF could benefit from the bill.

More specifically, the bill provides immediate payment of \$4.2 billion in TANF funds for the first quarter of fiscal year 2006 to all states, money that would otherwise be delayed until next month. Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama would receive a 20 percent increase in their federal TANF allocation. In addition, the bill waives time limits on TANF assistance for

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hurricane victims and waives penalties incurred by states resulting from hurricane damage or efforts to support victims.

The TANF program assists families with children when the parents or other responsible relatives cannot provide for the family's basic needs. The federal government provides grants to states to run the TANF program, which was created as a result of the 1996 welfare reform initiative. Johnson is a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over the TANF program.

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